

# **Citizen Oversight of Police: 2001 Fact Sheet**

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August 13, 2001

Our local community is responding to a series of deadly Police/citizen encounters with discussions of creating strong citizen oversight of Police agencies and this is the basis for my sharing information, and supporting internet links, for serious students of the issue. This is intended to help policymakers, and their constituents, make informed decisions in the near future.

## **Who has the best Police accountability model?**

Experts disagree but many feel it is not likely to be found in the USA.

<http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/police.pdf>  
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/consult/complain.htm>

## **In the USA, what are the best models?**

This is a dynamic issue given that changes are happening frequently and new leaders emerge as a result. It is a good idea to learn of different models by contacting the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE).

<http://www.nacole.org/>  
<http://www.opcc.bc.ca/cacole.htm>

## **Are all Police agencies against citizen oversight?**

No, there are many enlightened professionals in Law Enforcement.

<http://www.policeforum.org/racial.html>  
<http://www.policylink.org/pdfs/ForceSummary.pdf>

## **Who is against strong citizen oversight?**

Union representatives who fear subpoena power abuse articulate much of the resistance.

<http://www.napo.org/>  
<http://www.iupa.org/index2.html>  
<http://www.flpba.org/>  
<http://www.dcpba.org/>

### **Where does the US Government stand?**

Much has been written that is readily available. Administrations come and go, but the documents remain. See **Principles for Promoting Police Integrity**. 2001, NCJ 186189.

<http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojp/186189.pdf>

### **Does the Department of Justice provide advice?**

They periodically study the matter, sampling a few communities, but hesitate to recommend a “best practice” model given great variation in State statutes. They recently published **Citizen Review of Police: Approaches and Implementation**. 2001, NCJ 184430.

<http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/184430.pdf>

### **Who is the best known academic expert regarding Citizen Oversight?**

One of the best-known writers is Professor Samuel Walker of Omaha, Nebraska who recently published **Police Accountability: The Role of Citizen Oversight**.

<http://www.unomaha.edu/~crimjust/walker.html>

### **Is Miami-Dade’s Independent Review Panel (IRP) a good model?**

It is strong in independence from administrative or political interference, jurisdiction over all County departments, and in the Panel member selection mechanism, but is weak in that it may compel testimony only in whistleblower retaliation complaints. Police officers charged with allegations of wrongdoing are not mandated to cooperate with the citizen Panel investigation.

<http://www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/irp>

### **Are there Police departments in the US that mandate that their officer’s cooperate with the citizen oversight agency?**

Yes, the annual report of the San Francisco Office of Citizen Complaints documents that 27 officers were subjects of disciplinary action by their department, last year, due to failure to cooperate with investigations. Several external investigatory agencies with authority to compel testimony are established in the US. Some of the best listed below.

<http://police.sfgov.org/occ/>

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/prc/>

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/other/cpra.html>

## **Where are the strongest models in the world today?**

In part stimulated by a racist incident documented in The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (<http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm>), the United Kingdom is making major reforms that will transform the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) into the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). Reading the recently published **Complaints against the Police: Framework for a New System** is instructive.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/pcrg/pcfrmwk.htm>

Australia, New Zealand and Northern Ireland have models worth looking into. The Police Integrity Commission in New South Wales and the Criminal Justice Commission of Queensland are very strong in comparison to any proposal being discussed locally.

<http://www.cjc.qld.gov.au/>

<http://www.pasa.asn.au/nswrc2.htm>

[http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/2001/police\\_complaints/index.html](http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/2001/police_complaints/index.html)

<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980032.htm>

Canada has several provinces, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commission for Public Complaints, which have mechanisms worthy of study as well.

<http://www.siu.on.ca/>

<http://www.opcc.bc.ca/>

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/lera/>

<http://www.cpc-cpp.gc.ca/>

## **Are there many national and international organizations concerned about police accountability?**

Yes, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the ACLU are all active on the issue.

[http://library.amnesty.it/aidoc\\_everything.nsf/Index/AMR511471999](http://library.amnesty.it/aidoc_everything.nsf/Index/AMR511471999)

<http://www.hrw.org/reports98/police/index.htm>

[http://www.aclu.org/library/fighting\\_police\\_abuse.html](http://www.aclu.org/library/fighting_police_abuse.html)

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